

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Department of Transportation



# Federal Grants 101

## Guidance for Local Governments Applying for and Implementing Federal Transportation Discretionary Grants

February 26, 2025

Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina

## Disclaimer

The information in this presentation is NCDOT's best understanding of Federal transportation grant applications and grant delivery, as it exists today.

There is no guarantee that this information will remain accurate in the future.

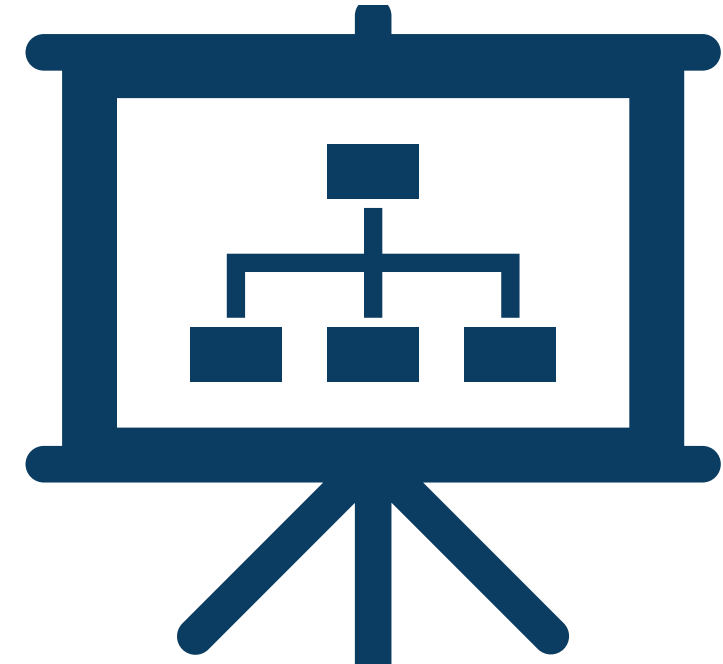
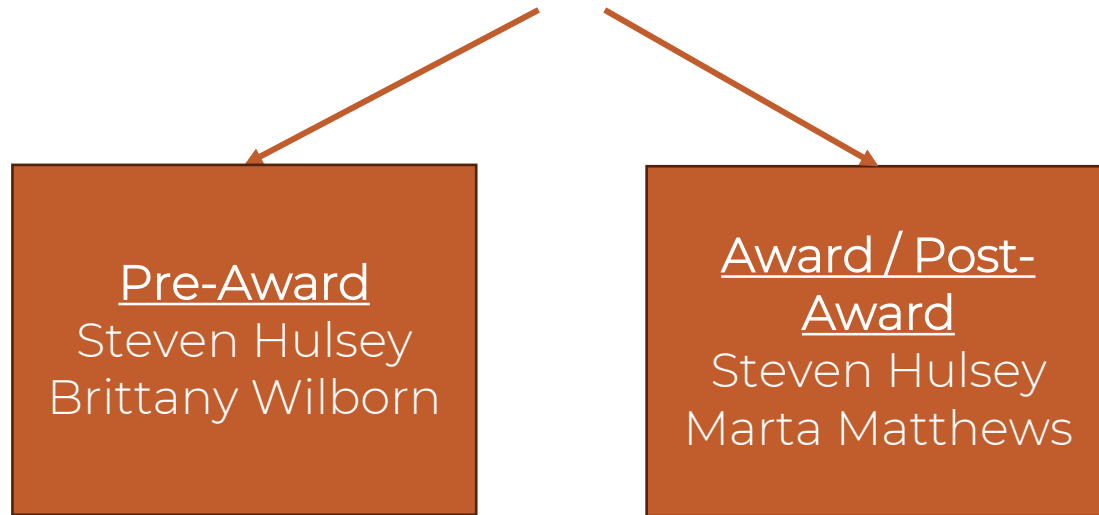
The presentation is meant to provide some resources and useful contacts for future use.





# NCDOT Grants Management

Discretionary Grants Committee  
Division/Business Unit Sponsors  
Grants Management Team





# **Federal Discretionary Grants**

**What kind of Grants are we talking about?**





## What is a Discretionary Grant?

- Discretionary Grants are awarded to applicants through a competitive process.
- Most eligible applicants are state, tribal and local governments.
- Although “grant” implies that the funding is available up front, the program works on a cost-reimbursement basis.

RESOURCE: <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/dashboard>



## What are some typical grant programs?

### *Grant Programs*

- BUILD, formerly RAISE and TIGER
- MPDG, which includes RURAL, INFRA, and MEGA
- Culvert AOP (Aquatic Organism Passage)
- Wildlife Crossings
- Bridge or BIP (Bridge Investment Program)
- RCP (Reconnecting Communities Program)
- NSFLTP (National Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects)
- NSBP (National Scenic Byways Program)

[Key Notices of Funding Opportunity | US Department of Transportation](#)





## NOT Discretionary Grant Programs - Federal Core Program Funding

Federal surface transportation program sub-allocations to urbanized areas >200K population – “Direct Allocation (DA)”

- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (BG)
  - Facility must be classified on Federal-aid system as a collector or higher
- Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program
  - Alternative transportation modes / solutions
- Carbon Reduction (CRP) Program – new with IIJA

Congestion Mitigation / Air Quality (CMAQ)

- NCDOT sub-allocates a portion to MPOs, RPOs in eligible counties

Strategic Transportation Initiatives – generally Transportation Alternative Program (TA) – allocated through the Prioritization process



# **Grants Pursuit (Pre-award)**

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## PRE-AWARD

- 1** **Applicant** registers on **SAM.gov** and **Grants.gov** in advance\* of application.  
**\*registration is not immediate**
- 2** **Applicant** searches for **USDOT grants** on Grants.gov where all USDOT grants are posted with a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) outlining program eligibility criteria and requirements.
- 3** **Applicant** applies for funding for a project that meets program requirements before the end of the application window.
- 4** **USDOT** reviews submitted applications and selects programs to award funding based on the stated criteria in the NOFO.



## Grants Pursuit - Pre-Award

### *Registration*

- *Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)*
- *Grants.gov registration to apply*
- *Local Governments need to have their own registration*





## Grants Pursuit – Pre-Award

Where to Find Grant Information?

- *Grants.gov*
- *Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs)*

Best Practices:

- *Consider an engineering firm*
- *Coordination with NCDOT and Letters of Support*





## Grants Pursuit – Pre-Award

Coordination with NCDOT

- *Direct*
- *Indirect*

[sipsgrants@ncdot.gov](mailto:sipsgrants@ncdot.gov)





## Grants Pursuit – Pre-Award

### *Grants Outreach (letters of support)*

NCDOT utilizes Smartsheet application to collect and manage letters of support (LoS) requests. The link is:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/23d0a43975444309806847fcaaca982>



## Grants Pursuit – Pre-Award

### Local Evaluation of Project and Commitment

- Q Is there a clearly defined scope or does the project make sense?
- Q Who owns the facility being improved? Locally owned? State owned?
- Q Will we, as the local, deliver the project or will NCDOT need to deliver?
- Q Does the local government have the staff with adequate skills to administer a project?
- Q Is there a good estimate of the Project? Identified sources of funding that the local controls? Is the funding flexible as to when it can be used?
- Q What happens if the award is reduced from what was requested? Gap funding?
- Q What happens if the actual costs exceed the estimated budget? Where will the additional funding come from?





## Grants Pursuit – Pre-Award

### *Submitted Grant Application*

- *Review by Federal Agency*
- *Continuing Coordination*
- *Debriefing*





# **Grants Administration (Award)**

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## AWARD

**5** USDOT notifies all applicants of the final award decisions, including application not selected for award.

Those not select may receive a letter of encouragement to apply in future application opportunities or seek alternative grant opportunities.

**6** USDOT and **Applicant** negotiate and sign a grant project agreement and USDOT disburses funds.

**7** **Grantee** implements the awarded project and adheres to all necessary conditions of the award.



## Grants Administration - Award

### *Grants Award*

- *Award Notification – Full Award*
- *Award Notification – Reduced Award*





## Grants Administration - Award

Just because an award is announced,  
work cannot begin on a project.





# Grants Administration - Award

*Programming in the TIP and the STIP*

★ ★ Fifty Years of STIP • Since 1973 ★ ★



**STATE TRANSPORTATION  
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP)**  
Current STIP



**2024 - 2033**  
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

January 2



## Grants Administration - Award

- *Grants Agreements must be executed before work is performed*
- *Kickoff Meeting with FHWA and USDOT*





## Grants Administration - Award

### *Grants Agreements*

- *Terms and Conditions (T&C)*
- *Exhibits*





## Grants Administration – Award

*Grants Agreements (local governments)*

- *Direct Recipient*
- *Subrecipient*





## Patience goes a long way...

- *Timing between notification of grant award and execution of a agreement can be lengthy.*
- *Local funding/priorities must be flexible to meet the timing of the grant.*







# Grants Administration (Post - Award)

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## POST-AWARD

8

**USDOT** monitors the project's progress and provides technical assistance and customer support to **grantees** as needed.

9

**Grantee** reports progress to **USDOT** throughout the project lifecycle through applicable Project Progress Reports (PPRs) and Federal Financial Reports (SF-425s) as required by **USDOT**.

10

**Grantee** completes all closeout requirements and submits final financial and technical reports.



## Grants Administration – Post Award

### *Grants Reporting*

- *Pre-quarterly*
- *Post-quarterly*
  
- Quarter 1 – January-March
- Quarter 2 – April-June
- Quarter 3 – July-September
- Quarter 4 – October-December





## Grants Administration – Post Award

*Grants Reporting (pre-quarterly)*

- *Cost Incurred but Not Invoiced*





## Grants Administration – Post Award

### *Grants Reporting (post-quarterly)*

- *Status reporting*
- *Financial Reporting*





## Grants Administration – Post Award

### *Grants Reporting (post-quarterly)*

- *Reporting dates*
- *Reporting Assistance*

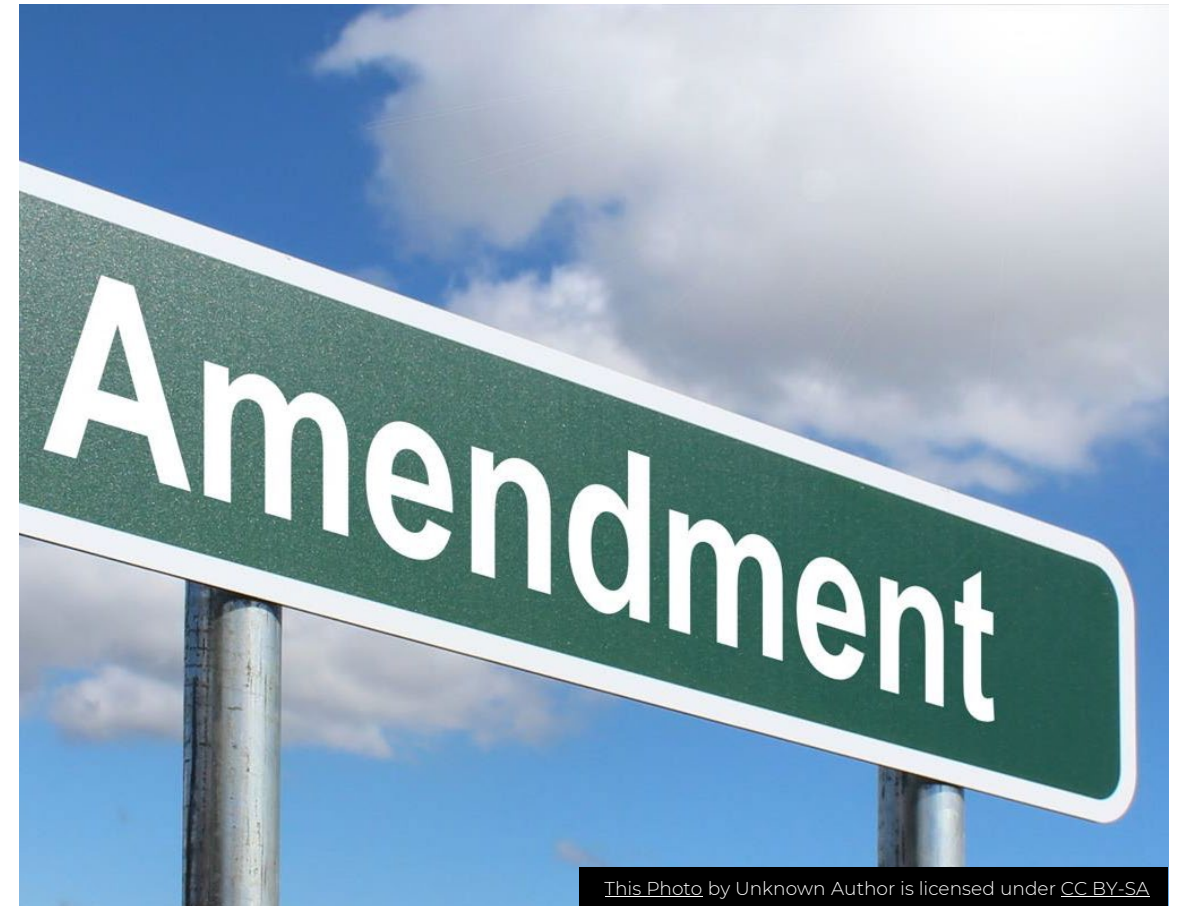




## Grants Administration – Post Award

### *Changes to Executed Agreement*

- *Scope*
- *Funding*
- *Schedule*



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## Respect the Deadlines



- *Obligation deadline is when all the grant funds must be obligated. This date is non-negotiable. It's usually identified in the NOFO.*
- *Expenditure Deadline is when all the grant funds must be expended. This date might be able to be extended, depending on the progress of your project.*

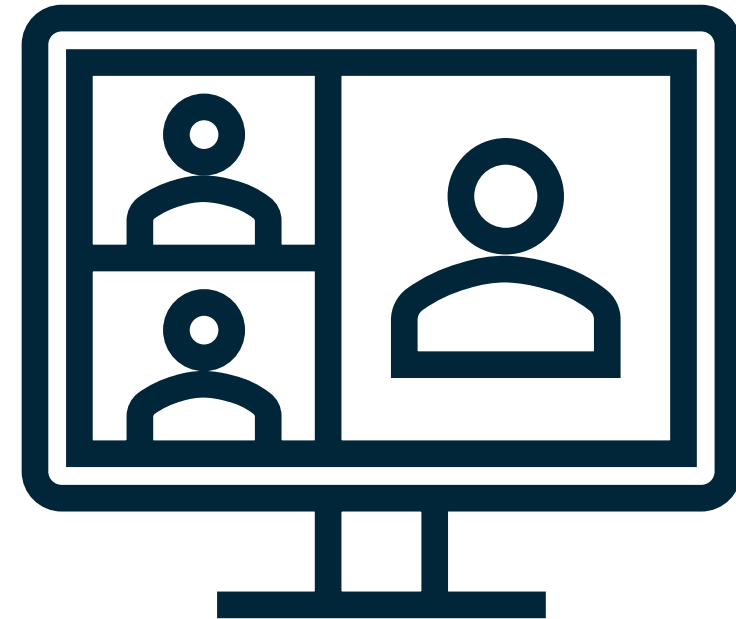




## **How Will NCDOT Help?**

For Subrecipient partners:

- Attend kickoff meeting with awardee and FHWA
- Review draft agreement and provide recommendations
- Prepare two-party agreement for reimbursement
- Establish a meeting schedule among any relevant parties
- Prioritize reviews of grant projects for a municipality
- Provide assistance with reporting
- Assist with development of amendments





## Federal Discretionary Grants – NCDOT Website

- *Up-to-date information*
- *Grant application resources*
- *Guidance on engaging with NCDOT*

### *Website Features*

- *About Federal Discretionary Grants*
- *Discretionary Grant Coordination – STIP unit and LPMO*
- *Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs)*
- *NCDOT Letter of Support Request Form*
- *Local Government Collaboration*
- *FAQs*
- *Links to Additional Resources*

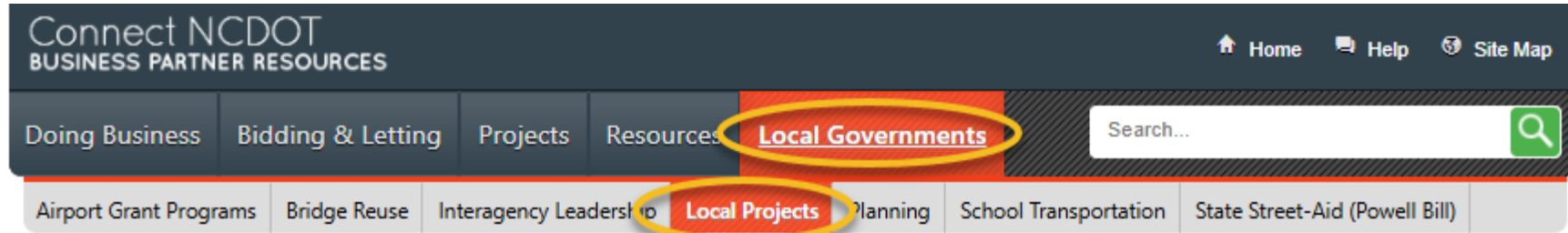


# Questions?

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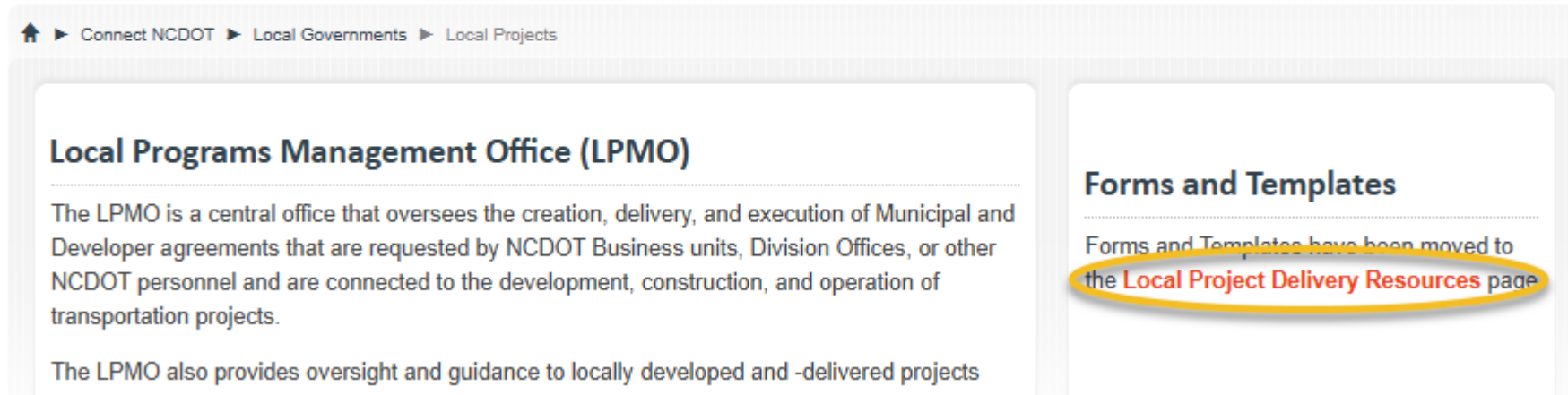
# 2025 Trainings

Connect.NCDOT.gov



## Local Programs

Information on Municipal and Developer Agreements and Locally Administered Projects



## 2025 Trainings

### 2025 Local Projects Webinar

DATE	SESSION	VIDEO RECORDING	POWERPOINT PRESENTATION
1/29/2025	Requesting Local Project Agreement In EBS Portal	Video Recording	PowerPoint Presentation
2/26/2025	Federal Grants 101	Register	

Send an e-mail to be added to the monthly training invites:

[LPMO@NCDOT.gov](mailto:LPMO@NCDOT.gov)



# Contact Us

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 [ncdot.gov](http://ncdot.gov)

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/Funding/Pages/default.aspx>

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 View All Channels

**Thank you!**

